



## The Jerusalem Council: Introduction to James Acts 15:1-20 June 28, 2026

Pastor Vaughn

### 1. The promise made – Acts 1:8

### 2. The promise kept – Acts 2 - 14

### 3. The attack on the gospel – Acts 15:1

### 4. The defense of the true gospel – Acts 15:2-20

**Acts 15:1** Some men came down from Judea and [began] teaching the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved." **2** And when Paul and Barnabas had great dissension and debate with them, [the brethren] determined that Paul and Barnabas and some others of them should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders concerning this issue. **3** Therefore, being sent on their way by the church, they were passing through both Phoenicia and Samaria, describing in detail the conversion of the Gentiles, and were bringing great joy to all the brethren. **4** When they arrived at Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they reported all that God had done with them. **5** But some of the sect of the Pharisees who had believed stood up, saying, "It is necessary to circumcise them and to direct them to observe the Law of Moses." **6** The apostles and the elders came together to look into this matter. **7** After there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, "Brethren, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles would hear the word of the gospel and believe. **8** "And God, who knows the heart, testified to them giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He also did to us; **9** and He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith. **10** "Now therefore why do you put God to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? **11** "But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they also are." **12** All the people kept silent, and they were listening to Barnabas and Paul as they were relating what signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles. **13** After they had stopped speaking, James answered, saying, "Brethren, listen to me. **14** "Simeon has related how God first concerned Himself about taking from among the Gentiles a people for His name. **15** "With this the words of the Prophets agree, just as it is written, **16** 'AFTER THESE THINGS I will return, AND I WILL REBUILD THE TABERNACLE OF DAVID WHICH HAS FALLEN, AND I WILL REBUILD ITS RUINS, AND I WILL RESTORE IT, **17** SO THAT THE REST OF MANKIND MAY SEEK THE LORD, AND ALL THE GENTILES WHO ARE CALLED BY MY NAME,' **18** SAYS THE LORD, WHO MAKES THESE THINGS KNOWN FROM LONG AGO. **19** "Therefore it is my judgment that we do not trouble those who are turning to God from among the Gentiles, **20** but that we write to them that they abstain from things contaminated by idols and from fornication and from what is strangled and from blood. (NASB95)

# Application Questions

*These questions are provided for your further study and application of today's sermon. Thoughtfully writing out the answers to these questions will help to drive home the point of today's study. It is also helpful when you are able to discuss your answers with others. For more information about Koinonia Groups at Heritage Church that utilize these questions as the basis for their discussion, please see Pastor Vaughn or e-mail Vaughn@hcgj.org.*

1. Read Matthew 28:19-20 and Acts 1:8. Do these instructions, given by Jesus to His disciples, seem to indicate that it was always God's plan for the gospel to be preached to the gentiles? Why?
2. Was salvation by faith for all, including gentiles, previewed in the ministry of Jesus? Read and interact with Matthew 8:5-13 and Matthew 15:21-28 in your answer.
3. How did the Lord use the persecution of the early church to help fulfill His promise that the disciples would be His witnesses even to the remotest part of the earth?
4. Does God still use adversity in the lives of His people today for their benefit and to accomplish His will? How?
5. What do we mean when we say that salvation is by God's grace alone through faith in Christ alone?

*Here are some resources that may assist you in a deeper study of the truths presented in today's sermon. While Pastor Vaughn cannot endorse every concept presented in each book, he does believe these resources will be helpful in profitably thinking through today's topic.*

Bruce, F.F. **The Book of Acts**, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1988.

MacArthur, John. **The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Acts 1-12**, Moody Publishers, 1994.

MacArthur, John. **The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Acts 13-28**, Moody Publishers, 1996.

\*Sproul, R.C. **Acts: An Expository Commentary**, Ligonier Ministries, 2019.

\*In today's message, Pastor Vaughn read a quote from R.C. Sproul. While Dr. Sproul was a cherished brother with whom we agree on the crucial church doctrine of soteriology (salvation), Heritage Church differs from his position on matters of eschatology and ecclesiology.

*Streaming of both the audio and video of today's sermon is available on the Heritage website (HCGJ.org) and App (Heritage GJ). The App can also be found on YouTube, RokuTV, AppleTV, GoogleTV, FireTV, and CarPlay. Podcasts for Heritage Church can also be found on your favorite provider.*